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Yvette Alvarez-Perez

2/17/04
Date

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No. : 10/055,822
Applicant : Volkmar Schwitzky et al.
Filed : January 23, 2002
Title : FINISHING PROCESS
Examiner : Parker, Frederick J.
Art Unit : 1762
Attorney Docket No. : 103797-238-NP

OFFICIAL

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

REPLY TO ADVISORY ACTION

Sir:

This is responsive to the Advisory Action mailed on December 15, 2003 with the Decision on the Petition to Revive the Application. This Reply to Advisory Action and the Reply to Final Office Action filed on Nov. 13, 2003 serve as the submission required for the Request for Continued Examination (RCE), which is being filed concurrently under 37 CFR 1.114. Applicants request entry of both replies and reconsideration of the above-identified patent applications in view of the amendments and remarks in the replies.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner contends,

“[m]erely specifying “watermark” for “distinguishing feature” does not patentably distinguish over the prior art because the combination of Weitzberg in view of Shenton already

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provides a coating process comprising applying a watermark to a printed security substrate which is subsequently at least partially lacquered for the same reasons, namely providing tamperproof security seals. The proposed amendment therefore fails to overcome the prior art rejections."

The present invention as defined in claim 1, as amended in the Reply to the Final Office Action, relates to a method for finishing a printed security sheet carrying at least one watermark, comprising: (1) partially coating the printed security sheet in one step with a layer of lacquer to the at least one watermark such that the at least one watermark is emphasized by increasing the transparency thereof; and (2) lacquering the printed security sheet in another step over its whole surface to increase the durability of the security sheet. The Applicants have found that coating a watermark with a layer of lacquer increases the transparency of the watermark and therefore, the watermark is more clearly visible, due to the increased difference in transparency of the watermark and its surrounding area, so that the watermark can be recognized clearly even without holding the sheet against a source of light. The purpose of the claimed invention is not tamperproofing the security seals as contended by the Examiner.

Weitzberg teaches a tamper-proof identification document comprising a base card attached to a photographic layer comprising both a picture section and a data text section. A significant marking extends over both the picture and text sections. The photographic layer is overlaid with a transparent security coating layer. In column 2, lines 38-41, Weitzberg describes that the specific marking is preferably a water-marking. However, Weitzberg does not teach or suggest the use of a watermark which is partially coated and emphasized with lacquer prior to coating the protective transparent security coating.

Shenton teaches a method of providing a security device on a substrate comprising embossing at least one transitory image, and a linear area which is visible when the device is examined from substantially all viewing angles. Shenton further teaches that the substrate printed with metallic inks could be overprinted with a tinting lacquer to provide colored metallic effects. Shenton nowhere mentions a watermark, much less partial coating a watermark to emphasize the watermark.

Therefore, the combination of Weitzberg and Shenton still fails to teach or suggest the use of a watermark which is partially coated and emphasized with lacquer prior to coating the protective transparent coating. The claimed invention is not obvious over Weitzberg in view of Shenton. The applicants submit that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable consideration and allowance of all of the claims now present in the application are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the claims and/or drawings be amended in formal respects in order to place the case in condition for allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendment be carried out by Examiner's Amendment and the case passed to issue. Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required fees, including any extension and/or excess claim fees, any additional fees, or credit any overpayment, to Goodwin Procter LLP Deposit Account No. 06-0923.

Respectfully submitted for Applicant,



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